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# *Spira's Despair* **Revived.**

Being A

## **Narration**

O F

### **The Horror and Despair**

O F

Some late Sinners under the  
Apprehensions of Death  
and Judgment.

Wherein are such Unquestionable  
Examples produc'd, and such Mat-  
ters laid down, and proved, as may  
stop the Mouths of the Atheistical  
Scoffers and Mockers.

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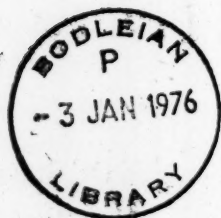
By **Thomas James**, Minister of the  
Gospel at *Ashford* in *Kent*.

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**Licensed** June 16, 1694. E. C.

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*To the right Honourable  
Philip Lord Wharton:*

*My Lord,*

**T**O make a Dedication  
of this small peice to  
your Honour, would be a  
Crime, if there were not  
such reasons as might not  
only excuse, but even com-  
mand the same from me.  
The very least is Gratitude,  
which obliges me to ac-  
knowledg your singular  
kindness and favour, being  
setled once in a Family hav-  
ing a branch sprung out of  
your *Noble Stock*; and much  
the same overtures having  
A 2                      been

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

been since made towards  
such another imployment ;  
But tho these considerations  
are too great to be passed by  
in *silence*, yet there is an  
higher reason which enfor-  
ces me to this undertaking ;  
'tis your Lordships Piety,  
that sincere, solid and ex-  
emplary Piety, which is to  
be seen in you. 'Tis your  
owning and maintaining  
Religion in your Principles  
and Practice, publickly and  
privately approving your  
self to be a Disciple of our  
Lord Jesus Christ ; having  
learnt that lesson of the A-  
postle, *to be stedfast, unmove-*  
*able,*



## *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

*ble, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, as knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Pardon me, my Lord, that I prefix your name, it being so suitable, it being that of a sound Believer, a sincere Christian, and withal so high and Noble; one who not only believes what Atheists deny, and expects what they deny, but adorns the Profession he makes of the blessed Gospel, and so confounds them: That your Honour is not ashamed of the Gospel, is most evident, and I am bold to think that your Lordship will not be*

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

offended with what is here  
offered to you, because 'tis  
Written for a defence of the  
same: The Lord God Al-  
mighty, before whom you  
walk, reward you, may his  
blessings be upon your head,  
and may your Posterity  
share in your Piety, and par-  
take of the same Mercies of  
the ever blessed God, both  
in this World, and for ever,  
so Prays (my Lord)

*Ashford, June*  
*7. 1694.*

Your Lordships very  
humble and obliged  
Servant.

*Thomas James.*

T H E

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T H E

# PREFACE.

**'T**IS common to put a Title to Treatises, and not to perform what is promised thereby; to raise the expectation of the Reader very high, and then to bring him down again with disappointment and vexation; to decoy the Reader with specious pretences, drawing a fine Front, and having nothing within worth looking into; the first and after pages holding no proportion. Who almost hath not been thus met with? 'Tis no presumption to think that many will be under such a jealousy, when they read the Name of Spira set be-

## The Preface.

fore this piece, doubting much whether that can be made good which is pretended, especially this bringing to mind the Second Spira may fill men with the greater unbelief. For, was ever any thing more plausible in its time, and afterwards so despised, rejected, and trampled under foot? Was ever any thing more taking, spreading and diffusing it self throughout the whole Kingdom, so generally received, caught for, embraced and entertained? Oh! what a light did the Second Spira give? and yet at last Went out in a snuff, and proved a meer Meteor, scorn and derision. Verily he had need to be well provided and arm'd, that comes forth again in this Cause; Arm'd with Truth, and well provided on all hands, seeing he goes out at such great disadvantage. But yet, Why should the folly, or weakness, or wickedness of some make others afraid and negli-

## The Preface.

negligent of their Duty? *Why should Truth suffer for Error and Imposture? 'Tis true, it will be hard to make men believe the real truth, when they have been trickt, and caught with falsehood; But still truth will and must prevail: Tho a man take base and counterfeit Money many times, yet shall he refuse therefore that which is good ever after? Nay rather he will desire it, for as much as he stands the more in need thereof. The Artifices of wicked men will not always attain their end, to hinder the Truth, and keep back its knowledg: Truth may be eclips'd for a while, but it will shine more brightly afterward. Spira's Despair is reviv'd almost every day, and it ariseth from one and the same ground still, the guilt of Sin, and the apprehensions of the wrath of the Eternal God. Let Atheists mock and scoff their fill, examples of this kind*

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*kind are very many, and their evidence most clear, they speak home to the purpose, and shall perform that for which they are appointed : There needs no Pious Fraud, nor Officious Lies to help Religion, and uphold the Truth : Every age, and every quarter hath some Monument or another set up, with this kind of Inscription, Look upon me, and learn to fear God ; take warning by my Torments and Despair, lest your unbelief and profaneness bring down the same Vengeance on your Heads : There are Pillars of Salt set up every where for our remembrance : The fire of Hell hath kindled upon multitudes of sinners, and the worm that never dies does begin to gnaw their Consciences, even while they are on this side the Grave.*

*Do any seek a proof of this? What mean those Self-Murders which are*

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*committed so frequently! This is so common that few regard it, and they are very few that examin the Case and enquire into it: But whence come they? How should Men hate their own Life, and have an Heart to perpetrate such a Villany to Destroy that which is the dearest thing in all the World unto them? Self-murder! what an unnatural wickedness? Thousands are so desperate as for the enjoyment of this present Life, tho so short and uncertain, to venture an eternity to come; for a few Months of sinful Pleasure, they will hazard the loss of an immortal Soul; so sweet is Life, such a darling! But these wretches lay violent hands upon themselves, and cast away this Pearl of Price, so unspeakably pretious, and had by all men in Estimation above the whole World. Let Atheists and Scoffers say what they can against the Terrours of the Lord,*  
*and*

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*and the anguish that ariseth from the horrors of Conscience, this abundantly proves it: When prophane and wicked Creatures thus destroy their lives, it is evident that they are under the sense of the wrath of the Almighty, that their Consciences are wounded deeply, that the Arrows of the Lord stick fast in them, which they are not able to bear the smart and anguish of, and therefore would, if possible, put an end to their very being. I do not say, that all that do thus are moved by this occasion, but ordinarily so it is; and 'tis no hard thing to discern when it proceeds from such grounds of Horrour and Despair: Who doubts of it, whether Judas did Hang himself out of guilt and horrour? when they are the ungodly, and the greatest sinners who prove such Felo-de-se's, there is no room for hesitation: When they are the intolerably proud, covetous, envious, filthy*  
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thy and unclean, Sabbath breakers, and such whose hearts Satan hath filled with wickedness; persons who have highly offended God, and lived in contempt of his Laws; when such can find no peace in their troubles, no hope; what can any man think of their Self-murders, but that they arise from this Despair? Were this matter well considered, there might be an excellent Argument raised out of it, and managed to the advantage of Religion, against those who would fain put off the man, and persuade themselves there is no God, at least that he is not such a God as the holy Scriptures reveal him to be, not Omniscient, and one that will reward every one according to their ways and works; who hath a witness within every man, and whose judgments are every where abroad in the world, declaring his Justice, and what shall certainly come to pass here-

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hereafter. This is a sort of proof near of kin to what I shall produce, and therefore I do but touch upon it in this place, making way to matters more plain and cogent, to examples which will irrefragably evidence the Truth in hand (sc.) that sinners are by their wicked ways reduced to horror and despair, such as doth even demonstrate God to be, and also to be an avenger of the ungodly: Some have been made sick of sin in this life, and have confest openly, freely and plentifully to the Glory of God, and this they have done, especially who have laid violent hands upon themselves, and have been very wonderfully preserv'd. Now out of many I will quote one example of this kind in the first place, making such observations and improvements as naturally flow from the same; a late Example of my own personal knowledge.

Sec. I.

## § I.

**I**N the year 1689. *Octob. 27.* about 5 of the Clock in the Evening one *R.L.* cut his own throat, with an intention of *Self-murder*. It was done but a few doors from the place of my abode; so that the Report and Outcry reached me in a few minutes: The man had always been a stranger to me; so that I know not that I had ever seen his Face; however, I had no manner of acquaintance with him; but being moved with the relation of such a Tragedy, I was desirous to come into the presence of the poor wretch, and inform my self of what had past, to learn the true grounds of such a piece of Wickedness, and to observe his Carriage and Behaviour, as well as to be ready to yield any Ministerial

rial help, as there should be Opportunity. It was but a little while ere I prevail'd with a Gentleman, who had sufficient Knowledge of him, to introduce me. Being come to the Chamber where he had done this horrid Fact, which was now thronged with Spectators, my Friend took to one side of the Bed, and my self to the other; His Wound was drest by the Chyrurgeon, being very large and deep; the Wind Pipe was cut about half through; so that all about him concluded he was past recovery, and so he judged of himself, tho I really thought otherwise, and told my thoughts to some that night; by his freeness of Speech, and other circumstances, having Reason to hope that the Chyrurgeon would perform his part so well as to make a Cure, which to his praise he did. The Case being thus, I presently applied my self to him, asking, *What made him to commit such a Wickedness as to go about to murder himself?* At my first speaking he gave little heed; but asking him again to the same effect,

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immediately he turned himself about to me, and shew'd a wonderful willingness to fall into discourse. To me it seem'd, that so soon as ever he recollected who I was, he was glad of my Company. I still put the same Question; and now he replied, casting it upon the Devil; declaring how *he was perpetually tempted to commit somewhat of this kind.* I then demanded, *how the Devil should prevail so far as this upon him, and carry him away so that he could dare to destroy his own life?* Then he began to lay open, and spread before me his past Life; and truly he delivered himself so freely, distinctly and openly, the Room all the while being full of company (too many of them such as had been partakers with him in some, at least, of his Wickednesses) that it was beyond what I could have expected. He told me how he had left his Trade, being by profession a Saddler at Rochester, being debauch'd before, but then waxing much worse and worse; he bemoaned his lewd Company keeping, whereby he was

hardened every day more than other; especially the sin of Sabbath-breaking he confess'd, and bewailed above all the rest, having of late years seldom or never attended upon the publick Worship of God. *At the first, said he, I spent indeed good part of my time in reading privately at home; but then I fell off from that also, and frequented Ale-houses, and such like places on that day, spending the Sabbath in drinking, revelling, &c.* While he was relating these things, one came in, who had been an Old Companion, and too much conversant with him in those ways; He seeing him standing at the Beds Feet, cryed out, *Oh——have a care, beware; you see what those wicked courses have brought me to, especially the sin of Sabbath-breaking.* These words he uttered not without warmth and vehemency. After such a Narration as this made to me, and some other discourses between us, he requested me to pray with him; particularly he desired, and directed me to pray for a little longer time to live, that he might be

be spared but to the morning: One Night ! but One Night ! that it would please God to grant him but that Petition, that he might have a short time to repent, confess his sins, and call upon the Lord for forgiveness and mercy. I reply'd, That it was not a thing he could expect; how could he think God should be so gracious to spare his Life when he had attempted so wickedly to take it away ? Why should he look for this Favour at God's hands, seeing he had left him so long, and most desperately cast himself away, committing Self-Murder ! How could he think God would hear his Cry ! It was a time to look after his Soul, and to humble himself. Oh but, saith he, the Malefactors many times have a Reprieve; they are not presently executed after Sentence is past; and will not God spare me a few hours, only to the morning ? Oh ! may not this be, that I may have some Space for repentance, and to seek pardon of my sins. For my own part, as I hinted before, I verily thought he might be recovered, and his deadly wound healed, calling to

mind Instances of a like nature, when the Case had been more desperate, and yet a Cure wrought. But thus I discoursed to bring him to deep humiliation, and godly sorrow, and earnest supplication to the Lord for grace and mercy. Then he called for his *Bible*, and therein he shewed me several Portions of Scripture, which he had formerly taken notice of, and received some Convictions from; underneath these he had drawn black lines, and marked with a Pen, and truly they were very many. At this I wondred a little, finding that he had been sometime no negligent Reader of the Word of God. We turned to the 51<sup>st</sup> *Psal.* and other Portions suitable to his condition. We read and searcht into them, and I still gave him all the light and help I could possible. Then again he desired me to pray with him, which I did, there being a very mixt Company in the Room, some of them too well acquainted with him in the days of his Impiety. After Prayer was ended, and some



some little discourse, I took my leave, but could hardly get leave from him to depart, he holding me by the hand, and desiring my help; But it grew late in the night, and I was unwilling to hold him discoursing any longer, considering the great effusion of blood, and other circumstances, whereby his spirits must needs be exhausted, and much weakness follow, which requireth rest : So I left him, directing him spiritually, according to the ability God had given me ; particularly advizing him not to yield himself up to *Sathan's* temptations, nor hearken to any of his suggestions, or be affrighted at them, however he was disturbed, but to compose himself, and wait upon God, and see if he would not be more merciful to him than he expected, even with respect to this present life: But I could not thus part with him for that night, but about an hour or two after I returned, enquiring of the watchers, of his state ; I found his mind had been much disturbed,

he had talked to them of very frightful apparitions; and upon my dealing more considerately with him, he was not presently brought off from the same, but did seriously own to me that there were apparitions of Devils, tempting him, and terrifying him : I laboured to calm his tumultuous mind, and applied my self to him much as before, endeavouring to bring him to a sense of his sin, not only in this horrid fact, but in his life past, which had led him on to this wickedness, hardning his heart, and giving *Sathan* such an admission, and so great advantage against him; discoursing of the justice of *God*, and also of the redemption through *Christ*, and the riches of divine grace to save penitent sinners, even the chiefest of them, upon their true and unfeigned faith in the Son of *God*. In all this he was very attentive, taking in all that was said with great greediness and intencion of soul, expressing wonderful repentance, and crying mightily to *God* for

for mercy ; still he was exceeding importunate that he might live but a little while to perform that great work of preparing for an entrance into eternity ; But if it pleased God to spare his life, O then how gladly should he manifest and declare his repentance to all the world, and what manner of person would he be ? I still continued to visit him, next day, and I think some few days after till he was out of danger, and began to recover his former state of health. This is the summ of what I am able to recollect of that black Tragedy ; and indeed it is so long since, that I cannot be so particular as I would : Little did I think then of making such use of this Example. But as to the matters of any importance, I dare appeal to the omnipotent God, it is the Truth ; yea, the person is now living at this time of writing, who is the Subject of this Relation ; and it was all said and done openly.

Now I will make some *Remarks, or Animadversions* upon the whole, to

prosecute my great and only design in writing after this kind and manner.

1. How came this *Felo-de-se* (for such he was to the purpose of his Heart) to fall under such horror immediately upon the committing of this wickedness? If there be no God, no Judgment to come, but *Religion* be a *Publick Cheat*, set on foot only for *Private ends*; then whence was it that this poor creature who had been hardning himself so long in sin, and now struck this blow, should immediately recoil, and be startled at the thoughts of Death? surely, upon the grounds the *Atheists* go, now was a time for him to have Triumphed, as having accomplished his desire, and put an end to his miserable Life: He had been long weary of Living, and now he had desperately extinguish'd the Light of Life; how came he then to repent of what he had done, and to have such a dread of the darkness he thought to hide himself in? Alas! 'tis evident there was a

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Conscience striving and roused out of its deep sleep, which Revealed the wrath of God and his righteous Judgments.

2. Whence came this sudden change and alteration? Such fear and horror and amazement in a few Moments? Upon speaking a few words, and debating the matter calmly, the man became quite another than just before; whence should this proceed? Was there not (rì deo) something Divine in this sudden alteration? Indeed Atheists may brave it out while they are living, and in their strength and heat of Blood; but when it comes to Death, and they have the Sentence thereof past within themselves, and a fearful expectation of the Righteous Judgment of the great God, then their Hearts must needs fail them; they say indeed it shall not, but they promise more than they ordinarily perform: We see the contrary daily, even in those who were no ways behind them, who speak so presumptuously: And  
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What if they die desperately? This is no Argument; a Mad-man may throw himself into the Fire or Water, but who doth not know he takes the way to be burnt or drowned? A desperate Death of an Atheistical Wretch disproves not a Judgment to come; and that *Desperation* is the fairest side of their *Exit*; for Peace, and Comfort, and Hope they have none.

3. Whence came those frightful Apparitions of Devils, or wicked Spirits, distracting his Mind, and tormenting him now more than ever? If this proceeded only from a Natural Cause, he must be very wise that can assign it; The *loss of Blood* could not in the least dispose to it; but contrariwise, it must naturally tend to Dizziness, and a Lethargick Frame. The Body was not distempered with a Fever before, only the restlessness of the Mind might somewhat affect it; but all on a sudden the Man was full of *Terror* and affrighted with *Visions* and *Spectrums*; He had *horror in his looks*; the *Soul* did  
as

as it were shew it self through the Windows, in a ghastly manner, frightened, and *full of confusion*. How many thousands have suffered worse than all this in their bodies, and discovered no such *fear or terror*, talked of no such dreadful Apparitions? To say, that this was only Fancy and Imagination, or a fit of Melancholy or Frenzy, would be very trifling; For there was no bodily distemper that did necessarily dispose to such things. Was it ever known, that upon such a Wound, or the stopping of the flux of *Blood*, by the Chyrurgeon, Men fell immediately into *fear*, and *terror*, and *confusion*, and talking of being tempted and tormented by the Devil? Ask the Chyrurgeons concerning all the *Infections*, *Amputations* or *Cauteries*, they make, where the pain is unquestionably very great many times, and the Case every way more terrible, if nothing but what is natural be considered; ask them, I say, if ever they found their Patients in such a Temper. No, here was *Guilt*, a *wounded Conscience*, and *Satan*,

*like a Lion, roaring upon his prey; and those infernal Vultures flocking together about the same to devour it.*

But, 4.. Is this any newthing, and not the sad Experience of all Ages, in innumerable Examples of like nature? Doth not God threaten sinners, and do not his Judgments sometimes overtake them thus? How many Sabbath-breakers and Scoffers have been brought to such a confession, and struck with *dread and horror* at the end of their Lives? Those of them that have died natural deaths, have been oft under the same *Convulsions and Agonies of Soul*, as well as those that died violent deaths; there hath been no difference; so certain it is that *a guilty conscience* hath been the cause of such fearful ends, and not any unaccountable disorder of body.



## § II.

The former Instance may, and doth sufficiently evince this, *That man is subject to the Dominion of God, not only as a Creature, but as a Creature endued with reason and understanding, having a conscience which binds him over to the judgment of the eternal God.* It was not slavish fear, and crafty insinuations of designing men, that brought the first Notion of God into the world; but God himself put this Fear into man's heart; so that whenever he sins willfully, and contumeliously, he is consigned over to the Judgment, and bound in Chains of Darkness and Horror against the Judgment of the last Day.

The following Example will make this matter yet more clear and evident, and answer the Title fully, being a Case of downright Despair, under a sense of the Wrath of the

Almighty, without being able to take the least comfort.

'Tis thus, Being called to a poor Woman in the Neighbourhood, one *M. T.* who was very sick and weak in body, and drawing nigh to her End, her Husband importuned me to hasten away as soon as possible, because she was withal lying under a very great disturbance and dissatisfaction of mind; He told me her Trouble of Spirit arose from some *Opinion* relating to matters of Religion, which she had imbibed in her Youth, and now it became her burthen. But when I came, I found another kind of Trouble, another Cause, and of a deeper Dye. The Woman lay in great Anguish, exceedingly disquieted in her Soul; the Occasion far wide of what her Husband suggested; but he spake as he thought, those about the Woman keeping back the true Cause from him (as they told me) out of Prudence, he being of too Rugged a Temper and Carriage. It was this; In the mean time while she was a  
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Servant, a lewd Fellow-servant had oft attempted to corrupt her Chastity, following her up and down continually, taking all occasions to *humble her*; in the dark about the House, in the Fields where she was employed in Countrey business. She *resisted*, and *withstood him* for a long time very *vigorously*, and never yielded up herself to his Lusts absolutely, to the last; but in short, not making the Case Known, nor seeking Help; at last, through the Lusts of her own heart, and the Snare of the Devil, being so oft assaulted, and so lasciviously, by a filthy wretch, she was guilty of too much dalliance, and suffered what ought not to have been.

Thus she got a Wound and Bruise in her Soul, which now caused Pain and Anguish intolerable.

She told me, she was a Reprobate, a damned wretch, that God had no mercy for her; yea, upon every turn this was her Expression, That she felt Hell-Fire within her. When I replied, That the Lord was willing

to forgive Sinners, even the Chiefest, upon their Repentance, and Faith in his Son, who had suffered the Wrath of God due to sin, to satisfy for the same, and reconcile Us to the Father ; That God was engaged to forgive such penitent Believers, and we sinned in not laying hold on his Covenant ; she would reply, *It is true, but I have wilfully sinned, and am actually cast off by God and am rejected for ever.* She shook and trembled, and sweat in such a manner while she was disclosing her sin, and declaring her Anguish and Torment, that it was a sad thing to behold a poor wretch lying in so miserable a condition, and enough to make one think that every thing was as dreadful as she said. When I found that no Argument would move her, to express any hope in God's Mercy, but she turned all upon her self, after the manner of such despairing Wretches, like *Spiras* of Old, and such as have been quoted of the same kind ; I demanded of her whether she was willing (could find

find her heart willing) to be saved? whether, if God should work such a wonder (as she thought of it) as to pluck her as a Brand out of the Fire, and to give her an Inheritance in Heaven, she would thank God, and be glad therein? Here she paused, and was at a stand: I urged her to speak her mind, to consider and answer. If her torments were so great already, and her fear and dread so much greater, would she not bless the Lord to be delivered from the lowest Hell, and to be saved with everlasting Salvation? At length she told me, *Yes*. Then I set in with her answer, and shewed her how willing God was, how gracious, that nothing was wanting on his part; that if she could believe all things were possible, she should see the salvation of God. But now she return'd her Old Reply; *It was indeed the truth; but her Time was pass; she was even now suffering the Wrath of God, the Torments of the Damned, Hell Fire was already kindled upon her.* I confess, she kept so close

to this, that it silenc'd me; and tho my heart was melted, and my Spirit much moved to reveal the Grace of God, and the unsearchable Riches thereof, yet I could not beat her out of that strong hold. In the end, I prayed by her, and then having spent a little time more in Discourse, I departed.

This I had upon my own Spirit, that God had Mercy for her. Methoughts I could spy something to build upon for hope of her Salvation; tho I must confess to the very last, even at parting, she said still the same things, *That Hell was her portion, that she had now an Hell within, that her torments were dreadful; and some other Expressions worse (in some sense.)* Once I replied, She was yet upon Earth, *on this side the Grave, in the land of the living* (because she never ceased saying, she was in Hell): She returned again, that the *Wrath of God was Hell, and that she suffered and endured without any difference from those in the place of eternal Torments.* This is the Sum of what I can call to mind  
of

of this dreadful Example. She died (as I heard afterwards, upon Enquiry) soon after. There was little or no notice of her condition, all being done in a corner, among poor people, where Visitors were few, and they were all willing to conceal so sad a Case : So that I know no further than what I learnt by this One Visit ; and if I had not been call'd so Providentially, what is here related had been all lost, and in all likelihood had never been brought to light.

Now let Us consider, and see what Arguments may be raised hence to be employed on the behalf of our Christian Faith, against Atheists and Scoffers.

(1.) I observe how small a matter (as Men would be apt to speak) caused all this Disturbance ; what a spark of sin set the Conscience of this poor creature on fire. Wantonness and Dalliance, how common is it in the world ? What a trivial Matter is it with many to stir

stir up Lusts in themselves or others, by wanton Embraces, and such like Behaviour as is not fit to be named.

Those sins comprehended in the Apostles Phrase of *Works of*

*Rom.* *Darkness*, are practic'd every where openly, in City and Countrey. But it was

this that caused all these Convulsions and Agonies in this miserable woman. O that Men and Women, Young Men and Maids, would be Sober and Temperate, that they would be afraid to do those things which tend to shame and confusion; yea, *the end of which is death*. Learn by this Instance to fly youthful Lusts, to avoid those wanton courses which corrupt good Manners, waste and wound the Conscience, lead sinners to the very Suburbs of Hell, and whence there is no deliverance without the displaying of the Riches of Divine Grace. But,

(2) Whence should this Horror and black Despair proceed? How came this Worm of Conscience so grievously to gnaw upon her heart?

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A Wound and Reproach she had got none among Men, nay, her Husband himself had nothing to reproach her withal, and yet she was seized with this Horror and Despair, and a Cloud of Darkeness came over her at her very end, and a dreadful Storm and Tempest did seemingly carry her away. If all were the Fruit of Natural shame, arising only from the Prejudice of Education (as Atheists talk) why then did she not smother it? What forc'd her to reveal it at the very end of her Life? Or how came it to torment her so exceedingly? I dare be confident the Atheists and Scoffers commit greater Abominations than all this, and reveal it not, because they are not yet under such a fearful Expectation of the righteous Judgment of God. But when God sets sin thus in order, then none can stand, but the hearts of all flesh faint and fail; then Fear and Horror seize upon the sinners. This, this was the Cause, that though she was dying, yet she must needs disclose  
her

her sin ; therefore she could not hold it in, because she was full of the Fury of the Lord. It was neither common sickness, nor common shame could cause all these Pangs and Commotions. To see a wretch lye in this condition, sweating and shaking, and looking with a countenance which spoke her inward Terrour, and talking at such a rate of the Wrath of God upon her : What creature that hath the Understanding of a Man, but must conclude here was the finger of God in it ? Surely they are blind that cannot see this, they are without Reason, who would impute all to I know not what Occasions, rather than confess the Truth, to the Honour of the great God, and Judge of all the world ; it may be their own time may come when they shall be taught with an Iron Rod and Scorpions. Yet further.

( 3. ) I observe her godly Education ; for this, as she told me, she had enjoyed, and it was a great Addition to her Load and Torment.

Her

Her Parents were Religious Persons, and instructed her well, so that she knew she ought not to yield to that wicked Servants Temptations, and strugglings with her, without revealing them, and using means to be freed from such sinfulness. Now this is very considerable. 'Tis true indeed the Atheists will catch at this as though it made for them, and strengthened their prophane Principles, the stress being great they lay upon it; Say they, So it is indeed, where persons have been brought up with the Notions of Heaven and Hell, of Eternal Vengeance due to sin, and the Torments prepar'd in another world for the Transgressors of the Law of God; These things, say they, in time of bodily weakness come to mind, and disturb the Man or Woman, working upon the Fancy or Imagination in a very frightful manner, just as the stories of terrible *Chimera's* told to Children, make deep impression upon them, doing wrong to their Nature, by disposing them to fear, and

a timorous frame ever after. So shamefully do many discover their Principles, comparing the Terrors of the Law, and the Threatnings of the True and Eternal God; to such Vanities and Trifles. But will they hear Reason, and receive an Answer grounded upon the same, together with Experience, and Scripture which is fullfilled in the Eyes of all the World every Day? I answer then,

(1) How comes it about that all sorts of Persons fall under this Fear and Terror, all after the same manner, and sometimes those who are least likely, in the highest degree? Rich and Poor, Ignorant and Wise, Young and Old, Male and Female, those that have but little of this Education as well as they that have the most. What think they of those Honourable Personages of High Birth, of pregnant Parts, who drank as deep of their Cup of Abomination in their Life-time, as themselves, and yet in their Deaths fell under the same Fears and Con-  
ster-

sternation ? Surely the wise, and they that had been hardening their hearts a long time, and fortifying themselves so mightily, professing such Principles as these, should have quite vanquish'd those vain Fears, if they had been really no other, and meer Scare-Scrows. What will they say to the Death, and dying Remonstrance of the late E. of R.

\* But (2.) Doth not the Scripture say this very thing, That God will be more terrible to enlighten'd Offenders than to those who sin thro' Ignorance ? Are not they threatened to be *beaten with many stripes* ? Doth not God denounce greater Wrath against his own People than others ? *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth ; therefore I will punish you for your Iniquities.* *Luke 12.* *Amos 3.2.*

Now if God threaten this, if the Scripture prophecy of such a thing, and it come frequently to pass, it is evident that it is of God, and that

the same Scripture is the *Word of Truth*. For Persons who have apostatized from their former profession of Godliness, who have departed from the way in which they have Religiously been trained up from their Childhood; for them to have their Consciences wounded, and to fall under Horror and Despair, is no strange thing, but what God may justly inflict upon them, and what he hath threatened to do.

But (3.) If Education be a refining of Nature, as verily it is, which none but brutish persons will deny, then the impressions which are made by such education are not to be counted otherwise than good and noble, not to be despised and condemned, but well spoken of, and reckoned such as tend to perfect the man. They that crye out against Christian education at the rate that Atheists do, that scoff and mock thereat, arguing after that manner, making the best fruits and effects of it to be meer folly and madness, are  
them

( 29 )  
themselves insufferable, and worthy to be banished into a land not inhabited by men, at least not by Christians. What would they bring the World to? To wallow in sins and lusts, to commit all iniquity with greediness; put out the eyes of the understanding; stifle conscience and sear it as with an hot iron; let loose the inordinate affections; and extinguish all Gospel revelation? No question of it; this is at the bottom of their crying down religious education. Should a Club of drunkards cry down all Sobriety, it were more tolerable than for men of no religion (save the name only) to decry religious education. Should those poor creatures in *Bedlam's Hospital* talk against *reason*, and laugh at all who were not guilty of their dotages and extravagancies, there would be more reason to hearken and assent to all they say, though they set folly never so high above wisdom, than to lend an ear to those Monsters of Men who set their mouths against Heaven, and spit  
D 2 their

their venom upon every good  
 thing, who talk against God, and  
 Immortality, and a resurrection, and  
 conscience, and a Judgment to come,  
 and would kill religion in the very  
 bud of Christian education: Who  
 can endure to hear licentious  
 wretches belching out those loath-  
 some principles of theirs, that early  
 education is the greatest enemy of  
 Man's nature, that the instilling  
 virtue and religion into them is the  
 debasing of their spirits, and mak-  
 ing them fearful and cowardly?  
 that this is all the fruit of the care  
 and pains of Pastors, and Parents,  
 and Tutors and Masters? that their  
 instructions and reproofs and warn-  
 ings, as far as they have their foun-  
 dation in Religion, are no better  
 than this, to make men live uncom-  
 fortably, and die in fear and per-  
 plexity. True indeed, it will  
 work this, when persons depart  
 from their principles of goodness,  
 and give up themselves to work all  
 unrighteousness; then conscience  
 will sting them, and death will be  
 bitter



bitter to them ; but the righteous are as bold as a *Lion*, and are not afraid to meet death, as knowing that sin the sting of death is taken out by their Redeemer, the Son of God, the *Messiah*, in whom they have believed.

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### §. III.

Because there hath past a word or two of Education, it will not be out of the way to quote an Example of the Vices of young persons, and the strange effects they have had upon them afterward, all their Life Long, working fear and terrour in them, arising from the forementioned grounds, even the sense of the Displeasure of the most pure and righteous God, whom they have provoked by their lewd practices. I have known a young man (and I would I could not say more than one) who being at a School where

where the Boys among themselves committed many evil things, even Defiling themselves, and working such things as were unseemly, he hereby got such a wound and bruise in his Conscience as was never after thoroughly healed, never having perfect joy and comfort afterwards; though he wept bitterly, and humbled himself, and repented in the very dust, and laid hold on the promise of Pardon and Forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ, yet the remembrance of those youthful ways was a burden very heavy, and a matter of continual shame and trouble: Others might be cheerful and comfortable, enjoying tranquility and serenity of mind, and having a bright Heaven over their heads; but as for him he still complained, that there was a cloud upon his Spirit, and that shame and confusion were ever before him; and all this arose from that early practice which his companions enticed him to, even to sport themselves together in such a manner as

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defiled them : It is not fit to express the matter more plainly, for as the Apostle speaks of those greater crimes of the Heathens, 'tis true of this little seed and

bud of that wicked- Eph. 5. 12.

ness it is a shame even to

*speake of those things which are done of them in secret.* And verily it would

be an excellent peice of service to

Christian Religion if governours of

families, especially they who take

youth to board for publick Schools,

and School-Masters themselves,

would have a watchful eye over

those committed to their trust ; If

they would employ and encourage

some youths they could trust to

make report of the very secret pra-

ctices of their Companions : Little

do many think what leudness is

committed in their houses, yea in

their Schools; what work is made

for terrour and horreur in some,

and for eternal Judgment in others:

If they be not careful of those mat-

ters, and do not apply wholesome

councell, warning, instruction, or

cor-

correction if need be, they are the greatest enemies to their own Religion, the betrayers of the best part of their trust, I mean the souls of those under their care and charge in the absence of their Parents. I my self have been a Boarder in several Families, when about that Age, and in more publick Schools than one, and my Heart akes to consider what I have seen and known of that Nature: O that these few Lines may be seasonable to alarm them who have the care and tuition of Youth! But to return to the example after this necessary digression: Remarks may well be made upon it, such as these.

I. Whence comes it to pass that there should be such a little remembrance of youthful sins? That persons should be so mightily tormented upon the account of what they committed so early? Indeed what hath been here written is not the half what some have felt and suffered of this nature, it doth not express the heaviness hath been many years

years upon them; they have mourned for their evil ways, and would not, could not, be comforted : Though none have accused them of such things, yea though there hath not been the least notice taken thereof, not a word or syllable dropt to stir up shame or grief in them, yet they have fallen into this shame and confusion, and fear, accusing, judging and condemning themselves. What can this be ascribed to but the hand of God? But the Law written in their hearts? And that conscience which God hath armed with a power to accuse, witness, judge and condemn ?

2. Whence was it that nothing was sufficient to relieve them in such a case, however thoroughly to heal and comfort them, no not the consideration of the age in which they did such things, nor the kind of evil committed, nor such other circumstances as might attenuate and lessen the crime ? Atheistical persons mock at all sin, however circumstantiated, but surely such

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cases

Eases as these they would count meer trifles, and turn them off very easily, sporting at such youthful extravagancies. But, alas ! These considerations were not wanting to those who yet were scarce able to bear up under their burden of guilt and horror ; they had reason to consider the case well, and make the best of it, but their reason was that which wounded them more deeply, because they saw such natural *corruption* within them, such early inclinations to evils, and such consent and yeilding to leud and wicked companions. The Law of God was made for the young as well as the old, and therefore the breach of that Law, though in their youth, was a grievous wound and torment to them.

3. The secrecy of those young sinners is very remarkable. Sinners of all ages and conditions are naturally alike afraid of the Law ; therefore they all vainly *seek* to hide themselves ; even these young ones use to seek secret places to pollute them-

themselves; so that such as these may well come under the Apostles rebuke of *Chambering* and *Wantonness*, as well Rom. 13. 13. as those who are old in sin. There were indeed degrees among them, some being more hardened than others, and not sticking at any place, but others, and more commonly, seeking a greater privacy.

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## §. IV.

I come now to produce another sort of example, tending still to make good the Argument, that there is a God, and that he governs the world, and will in his time judge the world, and reward every man eternally according to his works: The proof hath hitherto arisen thus, that the Soul or conscience of man hath a certain sense thereof, even in the greatest sinners

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them;

themselves ; Upon the breach of  
 Gods law there hath followed shame  
 and horroure, such as declares and  
 makes it evident to all the world,  
 that they expect the vengeance of  
 the just and eternal God to come  
 upon them and consume them;  
 and it hath been made as plain,  
 that all this was *Supernatural*: Now  
 the following examples are also to  
 the same purpose, though a little  
 differing, and of a lower sphere. It  
 hath been my lot to have been ac-  
 quainted with several persons who  
 have been under great disquietude  
 of mind, strange hurries, confusions  
 and distractions, which have  
 brought them almost to their wits  
 end ; the cause of all which hath  
 been preternatural, I mean not  
 from their bodily humours, con-  
 stitutions and tempers, or at least  
 but accidentally, as I shall shew, and  
 labour to set forth by and by: these  
 cases were spiritual, and sometimes  
 little or nothing depending upon  
 the body ; and they had ends very  
 different, some very tragical, others  
 with-



without any mischief coming upon them, nay, very comfortable and peaceable, going off with greater light and liberty and tranquility.

Once I was called to a man in our neighbourhood one R. M. whose condition was deplorable, and the occasion of his trouble as strange, and his end as lamentable, by laying violent hands on himself, and destroying his own life. The case was this, (as he told me face to face) One night as he lay in bed he heard (as he thought) great groaning and lamentation made in the next room, which continued and increased to that height that he was exceedingly disturbed, and thought verily that the Woman who lay there (and was his House-keeper, he being a single Man) was the person from whom it proceeded. Hereupon he arose, and enquired of her if all were well. She answered, *Yes*. Then he returned, and immediately heard the same Groans; This put him upon thinking what it should mean; and then

It darted into his mind, that his Sister, a poor Woman, who lived about a Mile and an half off, was Sick and dying: He presently hast'ned away to her House, found the door locked, and the Woman indeed so sick and spent, that she was not able to rise and let him in; upon this he called help, broke open the door, and finding her in a very dangerous condition, got Advice from one who Practis'd Physick (the next at hand) who ordered some Medicines, but in vain, for she quickly died.

This strange accident struck such a damp upon his Spirits, that he fell immediately into a deep Melancholly, which ended at last very Tragical, both for Body and Soul; for he killed himself, and while he lived, lay under horror and despair. He cried out *he was Damned*, and could have no Peace or Rest, or take any Comfort. When I discoursed him it appeared to me that his mind was wonderfully disturbed and confused:

ed: He aggravated his crime of neglecting his poor Sister at a strange rate. Poor Wretch! He would plead, that not to shew pity, and to help the Fatherless and Widows in distress, was the greatest sin conceivable; that it was greater than Murder; that none had sinn'd like him; tho all this while nothing could be learnt that he had been truly guilty in this Nature; tho he charged it indeed from this accident upon himself, and it workt strangely upon him, to such an height as the sequel may sufficiently make it appear. It was but once I visited him, when I heard from his own Mouth this extraordinary Relation, and saw the dismal effects of it; after some Discourse and Prayer, I advis'd him, according to my weak judgment, what course to take, and what means to use, referring him for his Body to a Physician, and so departed; I had hopes he would get over this Perplexity and Trouble, but I would what follows had not hapned; tho I do not

charge the Mischief absolutely upon the Parties to be mentioned, yet 'tis pity they acted so inconsiderately and did so much wrong. There were a sort of People about him, who finding the poor man in this trouble, thought to make a *Proselyte* of him, and presently sate in, and told him, *his way to have Peace and Comfort was to be Dipped ; that his Infant-baptism was of no value, and not to be trusted in as any thing yeilding Spiritual Profit and Comfort* : with this new Doctrin they puzl'd afresh his weak disturbed head, and whereas the poor wretch stood in need of solid instruction suitable to his malady, especially that the devices of Satan should be laid open to him, and his ignorant mind instructed in those Scriptures by him perverted, and the Doctrin of the Grace of God in Christ cleared to him ; instead of such Applications they busily infused this Notion ; and this presently filled him with a new kind of Disorder : Now he questioned his Religion, and doubts of his  
Opinion

Opinion and Principles ; he was in no condition to consider of these *important matters*, and yet he dared not desist : This became a new *matter of Confusion*, and how great it was I was better able to guess, than to express it, and leave every reader to judg. Thus was he hurried in his mind, and suffered not a little by this blind and inconsiderate Zeal : At last it ended in a perfect *Distraction* ; then care was taken to prevent what might happen, yet it could not be done ; for notwithstanding the attendance of two men, who were conducting him to a neighbouring Town for a Physician's help, he found a means to Cut his Throat.

'Tis beside my purpose to make *Reflections* upon persons of any *Opinion* or *Persuasion in Religion*, besides *Atheists*, who are its avowed Enemies.

The *Anabaptists*, or the *Baptists* (as they rather chuse to call themselves) are men to whom I bare no such grudge or envy as to bring up any evil report upon them, as a  
Calumny

Calumny or unjust Accusation. God forbid, that while I am writing for *Christianity*, I should act so contrary to one of its *Principles* as to do thus. They are *Christians*, and will, I doubt not, espouse this cause of our Lord with my self; and there are some of them my worthy good *Friends*, Pious and Judicious persons; but this I must Publish upon this sad occasion (and I pray God the Guilty would consider it) if a *Man* or *Woman* come under *Trouble of Mind*, and they can spie it out, or if any one newly be joyn'd to their fellow Dissenters of other Opinions, immediately they set upon them, thinking that now it is their time to *Proselite* them to their Party; and then they urge *Dipping*, and lay such a stress upon it, that they make it a Salve for every Spiritual Sore, and make all Religion to lie in going down into the Water. But, alas! What kind of course is this? To take *Advantage* of their *Bodily Weakness*, and *Infirmity*, and confusion of their *Minds* to win persons, or draw

draw them rather to a *Party*? How contrary is this to the free and open preaching of the Gospel practised by Christ and his Apostles? Truth seeks not corner, but loves the clearest light, and gets most ground when it meets its enemies in their full strength, and they have all the advantage on their side they can wish or desire. To act otherways argues a bad cause, or at least a rash zeal to promote a good one in a wrong way. Would to God such proceedings might be laid down, and men do so no more, as upon my own experience, and not a single one onely, they have done. Let Christians labour to build up one another in faith in Christ, in love to God and Man, and stir up one another to good works, and beware how they trouble themselves or their brethren (especially at so unseasonable times) with questions tending to endless strife and debate, raising doubts and scruples, and striking dread and terrour into ignorant and weak souls, making  
hem

them to question their eternal well fare, if they do not presently subscribe their Faith, and espouse their principles. *But enough of this,* yet I hope not too much, because my matter led me to it, and I cannot but judge it necessary; God grant it may be profitable.

Now let us recollect the former example, and say something of it, answerable to the chief design in writing, to confute *Atheists* and *Scoffers*.

Some may think this a barren subject to ground any thing of this nature upon, but yet not so barren a soyl, but it may yeild some fruit to them that search it out.

I. I observe that this must needs be a *Sathanical Delusion*, and carried on by the wise and holy permission of God to bring about his secret purposes. That this was done by some Angelical spirit (and there is little reason to think it a good one) is surely unquestionable. For which way should the spirit of this man himself act and work at this rate,  
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divining at things at such a distance, and being so disturbed at sounds and noises truly presignifying somewhat of a like nature with what he was concerned in? how should the event prove so true answering his thoughts? His Sister being languishing and dying at this time; and he not only fancying such a thing, but finding it more and more sensibly till he was led to the place where he really discovered the ground of that amazing alarm? To deny the matter of fact so notably circumstantiated, is for men to say that all are liars but themselves; to attribute it to a melancholly fancy or imagination, which might by *Chance* hit upon such a thing, would be a reviving of that old *Atheistical* dotage, that all things come to pass by chance, according to the sect of the *Epicureans*, even the world it self; but when we see the least things come to pass thus, as houses builded, and books made, without any help of an intelligent cause, meerly by this chance,

chance, then we may hearken to  
 such folly. But some may say that  
 melancholly persons have hit up<sup>on</sup>  
 on strange presages, as to speak  
 languages they knew not, to per-  
 form peices of art and skill they ne-  
 ver had any education to give  
 them knowledge or understanding  
 in; and so also to prophesy of  
 events beyond their natural power  
 to know; and so this man might  
 have a melancholly fancy or con-  
 ceit of somewhat which might  
 prove true in the manner recited.  
 But what an irrational and absurd  
 saying is this, if duely considered?  
 what is it grounded upon but meer  
 presumption, without any reason  
 to make it good? That this hap-  
 pens sometimes to melancholly  
 persons, or rather to persons  
 possess, none doubts; who hath  
 not read or heard of such things,  
 matters of fact unquestionably true?  
 But if this be of themselves, and  
 not from intelligent agents, who  
 invisibly work the same; repre-  
 senting such things to their ima-  
 gina;

gination, and moving the Organs of their bodies, what then shall we make of it ? What reason shall we assign ? Verily a man must confess that there is a divine relation, or a diabolical inspiration and agency, in all such cases: He that doth not own this, must say nothing, or as good as nothing ; Let any make tryal, and say further, and see if he doth not speak absurdities and contradictions, and discover his own folly : Like as *Plutarch*, who would give a reason for the silence of the *Oracles*, and not knowing, or at least not acquiescing in the true cause being our *Lord Christ's* triumphing over the Devil, and spoyling those principalities and powers, he laboured in the fire, and though a wise Man, yet he assign'd reasons very ridiculous, as will appear to any who will take the pains to read him upon that subject ; his great conclusion being this, that the *Oracles* were all from a kind of blast arising at set times out of the earth through some natural hidden cause

cause now decayed, and so there was no further spirit of prophecy; strange, that a natural blast, a vapour, or subterraneous wind should inspire the *Pythonisses*, and make them capable of predicting so many things as they did. But, alas! Poor Heathens who walked in darkness, might well stumble, and as they worshipped stocks and stones, and ascribed a divinity to their idols, they might easily err in ascribing this supernatural power to the winds and vapours. But to come closer to our *Atheists*, who are sworn enemies to the doctrine of possessions by evil Spirits; if these predictions be not from such a cause, then it must be from the Men and Women themselves; they must then find it within them; But it cannot be from the body, and the corpulent matter; how should that foretel and predict? Let them shew it if they can: But if it be from the Soul and Spirit in them, then here is an argument *ad hominem*; Surely then it is a more

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excellent substance and being, than they ever allowed; 'tis then indeed a Ray of the immortal Sun, the image of the divine nature. What strange accounts are there (infallibly true, and beyond all contradiction) of these kind of prognostications, proceeding from such persons as never pretended to any skill or art above other men, nay, when they themselves were ignorant, at other times, of such things as they then wrought or uttered, and knew not the truth of what they delivered so prophetically? Witness the famous dream of Sir *H.W.*'s father, about the robbery of the University treasury, wherein he saw the rogues in their true lineaments and habits so as to give a discovery of them in a letter to his Son in the Colledge, whereby they were discovered and apprehended: But there are multitudes of such instances. They who will not own some external agent, some spiritual intelligent beings, to make these revelations and impressions, must solve

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these

these *Phænomena*, another way if they be able ; and let them take heed they speak sound sense.

2. The subject before us runs yet higher ; here is a strange impulse upon the mind of this poor wretch carried on so far that at last it ends in distraction and self-murder: Yea though the man did immediately discharge his duty very largely toward the woman, and her children after her death, and began to be too profuse in his charity towards the poor, so that he would have parted with all his substance, and have become poor and miserable himself, if he had not been staid from his extravagant purpose ; yet nothing would availe, but a strange inquietude seized his Spirit, and he was hurried from one thing to another, till at last he was weary of his life, and sought to rid himself of his misery by putting an end thereto.

What shall be thought of this, and such like cases ? Is not the hand of Satan in it, very evidently?

Whence

Whence should all this storm and tempest arise, and increase so far, but from that evil spirit, who loves to cloud the mind, and wrap up himself in darkness, that he may work more effectually upon poor, weak and deluded Sinners? Here he fell like lightning, and as he Scared Job with dreams, and terrified him with *Ch. 7. 14.* visions of the night; so he did to this *ignorant* and *feeble* creature; and tho *secret things* belong to God, yet it is clear enough so far, that he hurried him away, and prevailed upon him to be his own Executioner. That mirrour of patience, Job I mean, yeilded not at all to this part of the temptation, of *Cursing God*, and destroying his own life; but here he proved victorious. These things may seem *Riddles*, and become matter of scorn and laughter to *Atbeistical* persons, leud wretches who give themselves up to pleasures, and have no will or leisure to examin the grounds and occasions of such tragical matters;

but how consonant is this to the holy Scripture, and how agreeable to reason, when all the circumstances are duly weighed ? How many and how frequent examples are there every where of this nature ? Of such workings of that enemy of mankind, and great disturber of the Peace and Quiet of our Souls ? Some are urged to do that which they most hate, and violently urged, against their Inclinations. Some feel a kind of Force upon their Spirits, compelling them to such Actions as they loathe and abhor. Their Fancy and Imagination is filled with abominable *Idea's*, and not only so, but they are even made to believe things of persons, which are contrary to their Sense, Reason and Judgment, and which tend only to Strife, Contention, Hatred, and such deplorable Effects.

I confess, when I have some times read the Monstrous Hatred between Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, as it is reported in authentick Historians, I have much wondered



dered thereat ; but now I think it is not so hard to render a Reason for it many times. If it were needful, or lawful to produce Instances by Name, to name the Persons ; I could set forth such Examples as are most amazing : Of Wives, who have lain under continual Hurries of their Minds, being never at rest, but provoked to take away the Life of their dearest Husbands ; against whom they have not the least grudge, but love them as their own Souls. Others have been stirred up to think, and do things which it is unaccountable how it should enter into their hearts, if there were not this Solution of it, *That the unclean and wicked Spirit, that Old Serpent, the Father of Lies and Murders, suggests such matters, and is at work in the heart to carry on the same ; he lays the Scene, he stands behind the curtain, and acts invisibly.* Some of these tempted persons have revealed their condition to my self, and bemoaned it, desiring advice and assistance. Some have been at the ve-  
ry

ry brink of Ruin, being ready to sink in the Mire and Clay, and to perish in those Mighty Waters; but it hath pleased God, after the Trial of their Faith and Patience, to set them free, and lead them into a large place. Some of these Cases spring, as it were, out of the ground, there being no manifest procuring cause, no sin or iniquity but what is common to our corrupt Nature; but others have had more matter within them, for that wicked Spirit to work upon; and then the Case hath been more deplorable, the temptation and trouble lasting longer, and being also more black and terrible. What can Atheists say to these things? Whence proceed those impulses upon persons Spirits, of this Kind, which are so common? Whereby they are almost constrained to do Evil, even what they hate, and which creates them so much trouble? Nay, which things are so *troublesome to them*, whether they *consent or not thereto*? Especially, what can they say to that which is carried

ed on sometimes even to *Frenzy and Distraction*, to *Horror and Despair*, which is more bitter and terrible than *Death* it self; so that they chuse *Strangling* rather than to live :

The Natural Result of All this, and what is most easily deduced from the same, is, That there is a *Devil*, and that through the *Corruption* in us, and the guilt of our hearts arising from our sins, he hath great advantage over us, so that sometimes he makes a *Prey* of sinners, driving them wherever he will, into *Spiritual Pits and Precipices* of *Horror and Despair*, and sometimes into *Self-Murder* of various kinds. Oh how needful is that *Petition* of our *Lord's Prayer*, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil*, αὐτὸ καὶ πονηρὸν, from the *Evil One*, the *Devil*, (as the *Scripture-Phrase* will bear it).

For my part, I do not think that the *Possessions* read of in the *Gospel*, were only singular Cases; for that *Age and Season* when the *Messiah* came into the *World* to give occasion to the proof of his divinity, by  
his

his dispossessing those wicked Spirits; he needed not such a testimony, doing other works which abundantly declared his Godhead; though out of pity to poor possessed wretches he did this also as it lay in his way: But surely there is somewhat of the same kind in all ages, and quarters of the world; and the more corrupt any time or place is, the more of these possessions; even as sicknesses, diseases and deaths abound according to a peoples sinfulness; and strange judgments are the fruits of greater wickednesses: Hereby there is, besides other ends of Gods permitting it, perpetual occasion for the proof of the power of the Word and Prayer; these work mightily upon such persons to help them: Though all are not saved by the Ministry of the word, and prayer, and spiritual advice, as the Apostles themselves could not always cast out *Sathan*, yet this kind generally goes out by these means; and it may be an argument

gument against *Atheists*, that when no other means in the World, as *Physick*, *Mirth* and pleasure, or business can avail any thing, yet then this saves many such persons ; it restores their souls, bringing Joy and gladness gain into them.

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### §. V.

Thus I hope the Title is made good, and the matter in hand made evident by the *Examples* laid down, and the Reflections upon them of the horreur and despair of some poor wretches under apprehension of the judgment to come ; some things also have been brought forth to corroborate the evidence. Now if any of the scoffers, and enemies of Religion, can give a solution of such matters as have been propounded, and give a rational account how these troubles come, and grow to such an height without any

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relation to Religion, to God or the Law of God, or a guilty conscience, and the judgment to come, they will attempt that which never yet hath been done, and I am bold to say, never will. We may read, and hear, and see Atheistical mockers in the pride of their hearts puffing at God himself, belching out their blasphemies against their Creatour, scoffing at his holy Word, and ridiculing all such examples of guilty, trembling Sinners, who are filled with the terrours and indignation of the Lord: They call them silly, weak and fearful creatures; They brand them with cowardize, and turn all into a matter of common melancholly; and this is the hinge upon which all (I do not say their arguments but) their mockery and railery turns; besides this they have nothing to say in defence of their abominable principles, and to impeach the solid assertions of those that are believers. But what a desperate folly and madness is this that doth possess these men? They  
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are not only of a perverse Spirit, as the *Stoick* of old, who would stiffly assert, that no passion ever beieell a wise or vertuous man, as though they could put off the man when they would, and be as Gods; or of a *Sceptical* opinion, as they who would not believe any motion, when yet they saw every thing almost in the world moving; nor such *Pyrrhonians*, who will doubt of every thing, and cavil for contention sake: But these *Atheists* and *Sadduces* of our age destroy Reason and Religion all at once; They lay the ax to the root of Truth, and resolve to give the lye both to God and man; nay they will not believe their own eyes, nor ears, nor reason, against their wicked principles. Some of themselves have felt the wrath of God, and fallen into grievous horroure, crying out they have sinned and done wickedly, and now God hath met with them, and their burthen is greater than they can bear; But their old companions say of them, that now

they know not what they say, that they are delirious, or in a dream, and that they are afraid of their own shadow. Then it seems none have sense but profest *Atheists*, none have reason but they. A wise world indeed at this rate! Nay the poor wretches who lye under such torments must be abused by them, and become their laughing-stock, while they are in such misery, and suffering the wrath of God. But this is just the old policy of the Devil, to lay false things to the charge of the godly, and to put false constructions upon the works of God, on purpose that men may not regard them, nor take any due notice thereof for their education and profit. These, say they, are poor, ignorant, deluded and melancholly men and women, and there is no heed to be taken to what they say or do. A fine stratagem! A design fairly laid to take off the sense of all the judgments of God in the world of this nature, to render all examples useless, and in short to make  
men



men *stocks and stones*, or which is yet worse, and they had rather, to make us all turn *Beasts*, that so we might go Hand in Hand together.

Truly, as it hath been wisely observed, *It is an Honour to Religion to have such Unreasonable Men for its Enemies ; And to have such inconsiderable Opposition made thereto is its advantage.*

Mr.  
Pascal's  
thoughts!

All that Atheists can say, is this, *Believe none but us ; Believe not the sober sort of Mankind ; for they are Ignorant, Melancholy, and Mad , Persons of no Courage or Resolution ; but trust Us, who dare do any thing, who set our Mouths against Heaven, and would fain bring our selves to believe , that there is neither God nor Devil ; who*

would fain renounce all Religion, and the Laws of God, and Light of Nature, and banish them out of the World; bringing confusion and destruction into all Kingdoms and Families: Believe Us, who live in the most shameful Neglect of seeking after *Spiritual Knowledge*, and yet condemn the most diligent Searchers into it for *ignorant and unwise*, who dispute, and set our selves against Religion, and yet never learnt, nor will we study what it is. Is not this the truth of these *Atheists* and *scoffers*? Their true portraiture? How is it then that men should hearken to them, and be enticed to walk in their ways? But there is an answer for it; 'Tis owing to the great corruption of mans nature since the first Apostacy from God; hence proceeds all this spiritual folly and madness. 'Tis

'Tis hard to make an end of writing against such a generation of men as these are ; and indeed I think they are not publicly handled as they ought to be ; not that that they should be reviled as men, nay many of them are persons of excellent natural parts and acquired also, but their pernicious and abominable principles cannot be sufficiently exposed. But my design is not an *invective*, but only to answer those cavils, and to take off the reproach cast upon the ever blessed God, and Christian Religion, especially the fundamental principles thereof ; such as the *immortality* of the Soul ; the Judgment to come ; Heaven and Hell ; The Divine authority of the Scriptures the being and providence of God ; the being of Spirits, Angels good

good and bad ; more especially the fallen Angels, those wicked Spirits the Devils : As for the last of these, the *Sadduces* of our age laugh at all that is written or related of them ; and that which it pleaseth God to permit as a singular means to convince an unbelieving World, they labour to expose to contempt and derision ; I mean not only the diabolical suggestions, and the temptations of those wicked Spirits, which do demonstrate their being ; but the frequent *apparitions* which are made by Spirits good or evil ; This they cavil at above all the rest, and are glad to meet with the mention of such things, as though thereby they should make a great advantage, and triumph over the truth.

Now

Now for the *sake of such Unbelievers*, and also for *others* who are at a loss in this Point, though I will not enlarge, as I might, upon this Subject, yet this I will say, and do protest before God, I lye not, but relate a serious Truth, That I my self have seen an Apparition, in the Sense, of which I am writing thereof. It was in the year 1684. in the Month of *June*, and in the clear Day-time, while I was in the open Air, in company with a certain young Gentleman: And this was strange, That the verysame Person and my self were nearly concerned within a few Days, in a matter which that Apparition was evidently a Sign and Token of, as the Effect proved.

The thing was really strange, that I should be joynd with him in that Action ; but there  
were

were *private Reasons* accidentally occasioning it.

Upon seeing this Apparition I gave Notice thereof immediately, and satisfied both my self and others, that it was no *Delusion* ; but the Event put all out of doubt within a Day or Two after.

That it was really so, *That I saw an Apparition*, I know as truly as that I now am writing thereof. It had this Effect upon me, among others, that tho I never doubted of the Being of *Angelical Spirits*, nor of *Apparitions*, upon sundry Occasions, yet now I was confirmed in that behalf, and enabled ever after to make use of it as an irrefragable Testimony for the Truth, being my self an Eye-Witness of something of the same kind ; and it pleased God  
that

that it hath since done me no small Service, in discourfing and arguing things of this Nature, when I have been able to produce this, and some other like Cafes, which have fallen under my own personal Knowledge.

Yet further, this I know, and do folemnly aver, That I have personally known an Houfe (to fay no more) troubled with *Evil Spirits*, that which is commonly called *Haunted*. In fuch an one I have lain many Nights, yea, Weeks and Months, and fuffered that Difurbance which there was ufually given: Not gueffing at fuch a *Caufe*, I was without any Fear upon my Spirits, but what I think might ordinarily befall any other man: However, it never wrought any *Confufion and Terror*, as is ~~common~~ upon the fore-  
know:

*knowledge of such Cases ; but verily thinking that all proceeded from Rebbers , and such Evil-disposed persons , and having strength sufficient with me, and being well provided against such Attempts, I was far enough from being daunted ; but still sought to put an end to the disturbance, but in vain ; till after much Vexation, and many Nights broken of Natural Rest, the Occasion was Providentially discovered , and the Trouble ever after ceased.*

*I know I write to the whole World, and in a Carping and Censorious Age, and it will be no wisdom to relate every circumstance, but rather be sparing, because I write not for Curiosity, but Instruction.*

The End was this : In that very part where the greatest Distur-



disturbance was usually given, and the Noises mostly heard, which would often render the Mastiff-Dogs very fierce, which I heard with mine own Ears many times, and could think no other but that, as the Servants cryed out, *The House was beset, and that Door would be broke open.* A few paces from the same, when the foundations were laying of a certain building, the bones of a child were digged up by the workmen, and sent in to a dear Relation of mine (the owners wife) and my self dining together, from which time to this day, being many years, the haunting or disturbance hath ceased : That this was a murdered infant is as clear to me as the Sun ; and there is the strongest presumption to lay it to the person of whom my honoured Relation pur-

purchased the house and land ;  
 he being a single person to his  
 death, and living to an old age  
 with maid-servants, between  
 whom fornication was in all  
 likelihood committed and mur-  
 der added thereto ; Upon en-  
 quiry of the neighbourhood he  
 appeared to be a person of no  
 good fame, but I could never  
 trace it further. This case I  
 have not been afraid to mention  
 upon any just and proper occasi-  
 on, nor am I ashamed now to  
 publish it to the whole world.  
 I pray God who knows the  
 truth of what I write to make it  
 serviceable to those who shall  
 read it. Much hath been writ-  
 ten (and that within a few  
 years) on this subject ; I cast in  
 my mite, and may say, I pre-  
 sume without boasting, that it  
 is somewhat more than others  
 have

have done before me. For I know not one of those learned men who have written so well on this occasion, that yet have written of their own personal knowledge, at least in two such cases. 'Tis true their Collections, and reports are beyond all doubt (unless men will believe nothing but what they know of themselves, and give the lye to all is told, though it come never so well confirmed) but what I offer here of this kind, is delivered upon my own personal knowledge and *drawn* out of the treasury of my *own memory*, helped by the *Diary* I kept at this time and *many* years before. But it is time to *conclude*, having proceeded so far as fully answers my design and purpose, of *relating* some matters of importance to *Religion*, and arguing  
from

from the same in its cause  
and defence.

The Lord open the eyes of  
the *blind Atheists*, and profane  
scoffers and mockers ; yea the  
Lord touch their hearts that they  
may acknowledge the truth,  
and no longer be the advocates  
of all *manner* of corrupt prin-  
ciples and *abominable* practi-  
ces.

To the wise and godly I sub-  
mit my labours, protesting  
(*once more*) that I have writ-  
ten nothing (willfully at least)  
but what is the naked truth,  
as I shall answer it to God the  
searcher of all hearts, and the  
righteous Judge of the World ;  
for whose *honour* and glory I  
did set upon the work ; and  
God forbid that I should speak  
wickedly for him, who is the  
God

God of truth, and neither loves, nor needs any lye; who hath also declared, that he will punish those who hate the truth, and will neither receive nor obey the same.

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*F I N I S.*

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